

**N.H. BUREAU OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES (NHBEMS)
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EMS PROVIDERS
REGARDING MENINGOCOCCAL MENINGITIS**

December 29, 2003

The NH Department of Health & Human Services (NHDHHS), in consultation with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC), is conducting detailed investigations of all cases of meningitis reported here in New Hampshire.

The Neisseria meningitis organism is spread primarily through direct contact from person to person through nasopharyngeal secretions (i.e. mucous from the nose or mouth). It rarely survives outside the body for more than a few minutes .

NHBEMS reminds all EMS Providers to utilize appropriate infection control procedures based on the nature of the patient condition encountered.

EMS provider infection control procedures might include:

- *obtaining all call-relevant dispatch information prior to scene arrival
- *utilizing gloves & mask protection particularly on any "respiratory/sick person" types of calls
- *immediately implement increased infection control procedures on initial assessment of scene and patient conditions
- *limiting the number of provider personnel in immediate patient contact
- *consider placing oxygen mask or surgical mask on patient as appropriate
- *proper provider hand washing, supplies disposal and equipment cleaning

Thorough patient history & documentation should include:

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| *fever history | *light sensitivity |
| *headache | *altered mental status |
| *neck stiffness | *body and/or extremity rash |

Providing a detailed patient report to medical staff when transferring the care of a patient is essential in helping to ensure an appropriate continuity of patient treatment.

Emergency responders are urged to heighten their awareness for the need to take appropriate, common sense infection control precautions to protect themselves, their fellow providers and the patients we serve.

For specific concerns about meningitis, contact:

- *NH Bureau of Communicable Disease Control, NHDHHS at (603)-271-4496/NH: 1-800-852-3345 X 4496 or the NHDHHS website: www.dhhs.state.nh.us
- *US CDC: www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/meningococcal_g.htm

The NHBEMS web site (www.state.nh.us/safety/ems) includes the "Enhancing Personnel Protection Against Airborne Pathogens" curriculum in the "Preparedness" section or contact:

Bill Wood, Preparedness Coordinator, NHBEMS (603)-271-4615/NH: 1-888-827-5367

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